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ABSTRACT

U.S. public education has always been value laden, and a straightforward approach concerning what values will be taught is an appropriate policy. In spite of U.S. pluralism, a relatively common set of traditional values is possible and desirable. Three assumptions have been accepted in this essay: (1) no one lives a value-neutral life; (2) teachers do teach values; and (3) moral and value education has content and process dimensions. The 1950's are often cited as a desirable pattern of "traditional" public schooling. Public schools were probably the most common vehicle for transmitting U.S. values in view of the diversity of ethnic groups and religions. In the aftermath of Sputnik, U.S. education became inquiry or discovery based encouraging students to question existing knowledge, formulate new theories, and analyze data. The 1960's are often viewed as lamentably as the 1950's are memorably. The Vietnam War overshadowed U.S. thought, forcing people to question themselves and their government. The process of values clarification became popular, although it was, and is, controversial. Questions of what and how to teach, and issues such as value-neutral instruction continue to plague these programs. The 1970's saw the "back to basics" movement gain prominence. Piagetian and other behavioral and cognitive psychology were used as a basis for this movement. Finally, the 1980's brought general conservatism to the development and implementation of curriculum. There is an emphasis on accumulating facts and practicing basic skills. Since 1900, the United States has moved toward a plurality of values which may be detrimental to the nation's future. A 27-item bibliography is included. (GEA)

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Symposium Title: Transmitting Morality in the Public Schools: History, Principles, and Implementation

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Symposium Title: TRANSMITTING MORALITY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS: HISTORY, PRINCIPLES, and IMPLEMENTATION

Paper Title: A MYRIAD OF VALUES: A BRIEF HISTORY *

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PURPOSE. The central purpose of this paper is to argue that American public education has always been value laden and that a straightforward approach concerning what values will be taught is an appropriate policy. The process and cognitive approaches to moral and value education[1] have been popular because they seem "value neutral" and nondogmatic, which are virtues in an individualistic culture. However, these approaches have not been "value neutral": among inherent limitations is a general bias against "character education" and resistance to the advocacy of specific values. In spite of American pluralism, a relatively common set of traditional values is possible and desirable. This paper will not argue for regression to "golden yesteryears," rather for a reconstitution of value content which has the validation of reason, universality, tradition, and pragmatism.

INTRODUCTION. A history of anything is inherently incomplete, particularly a brief history of moral and value education. The approach in this paper will be to 1) state applicable assumptions, 2) offer "summary premises", that is, summaries of major trends prior to the 1950's which can serve as premises, 3) qualify the cognitive and process orientation of public school curriculum for the past 45+ years, and 4) address the place for value content and character education in moral and value education.

ASSUMPTIONS. Three assumptions have been accepted in this essay.

*This paper is the abbreviation of a larger study in progess. One encapsulation of the study is in press.

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1. No one lives a value-neutral life, although one may make an effort to remain "fair" and relatively impartial in discussions of values. This author strives to live a value-laden life: one value is a bias for public education[2]. However, the author intends to proceed "fairly" if not impartially.

2. Teachers do teach values. They always have, and they always will because they have ethical responsibilities related to their profession, the subject matter, and the human needs of their students. Some values are taught consciously or intentionally in word and deed, and some inadvertently by example or happenstance. Resistance to teachers teaching values does not preclude their teaching values; it only obfuscates what values they teach.

3. Moral and value education, like traditional subject matter, has content and process dimensions. Educators have been more willing to deal with the process of thinking about values (e.g., Values Clarification) than the actual values themselves. Value content deserves deliberation.

PREMISES. Four "summary premises" seem helpful in establishing a discussion base for this paper and the others which comprise this symposium.

1. The United States of America has become an industrial/technological nation. Even agriculture has become predominantly, technologically driven big business[3]. The ensuing models of management have also become prevalent in schools, e. g., teachers as "decision makers" and students directed through "classroom management." Teacher effectiveness, student success, and the whole learning process can be systematically, externally measured and managed. Thus, schools impart "institutional values" reported by such authorities as Goodlad and critics as Spring, American pluralistic variance notwithstanding.

2. In spite of American pluralism, there may be values Americans hold more or less in common. "A moderate position holds that there is a common core of values shared by a plurality of perspectives, as when Grant points out that accepting the value of

rational moral discussion presupposes agreement on certain basic values, e. g., respect for truth, honesty, fairness, order, etc."[4].

3. Political democracies are caused by people who value democracy and act on a common set of values which will enhance it. "If democractic politics comes to be seen as nothing more than a struggle among pressure groups, regulated by no common standards of justice, people will tend to lose faith in the democratic process"[5]. Therefore, inculcating (a more palatable concept than indoctrination) civic values in American youth is a reasonable thing; Freeman Butts offers a decalogue of civic values for such a curriculum[6].

4. American schools do have Judeo-Christian roots which have given growth to a kind of civil religion or a pattern of traditional values. Many of these traditional values have become established because they are deemed "reasonable", are widely practiced, and have proven consistent with a "political democracy." Most other religions have some related, corresponding "universal" viewpoints, and any number of "secular" viewpoints have subtle, Judeo-Christian origins.

THE TRADITIONAL CURRICULUM. One can label the 1950's as a landmark period of public education. Truly, education had been through some dramatic changes in the preceding 50 years, but the 1950's seem to represent a plateau of American achievement and American hopes. Perhaps the Fifties' unique place between World War II (which remains an example of "just war") and the 1960's make it seem that way, but whether in retrospect or in fact, the Fifties are often cited as a desirable pattern of "traditional" public schooling. The public schools were probably the most common vehicle for transmitting American values in view of the diversity of ethnic groups and religions. Furthermore, teachers, community leaders, and local school influencers were rather traditionally minded citizens. In short, the public schools provided the common means for delivering a "civil religion" which Bellah described as, ". . . a point of articulation between the profoundest commitments of the

Western religious and philosophical tradition and the common beliefs of ordinary Americans"[7]. His next statement reads, "It is not too soon to consider how the deepening theological crisis may affect the future of this articulation"[8]. Thus, Bellah may have been questioning America's prospects for unity in view of the "God is dead theology" (which is now deceased) and the trials and tribulations of the Sixties.

A dramatic event prompted curriculum revision during the latter 1950's--Russia's victorious space launch of Sputnik. American science curriculum and American values (pride and opposition to communism) were directly challenged. A new science curriculum was inquiry-(or discovery-) oriented: it encouraged students to question existing knowledge, formulate new theories, search for and collect information relative to the theories, analyze[9] the data, and accept or reject the theories before repeating the next cycle. Rather naturally, empirical verification and the accumulation of knowledge increased in importance and have become mainstream to the American way of life: truth comes by discovery, and discovery never ends. The longstanding tension between science and religion was refurbished, which is related to the disagreements in approaches to moral and value education. Some favor nonideological, discovery, process approaches (as they view them); critics charge relativism, logical positivism, and other failure to instill human virtue. On the other hand, religious and philosophically humanistic persons favor some semblance of basic values in the Western tradition or with universal appeal; their critics fear indoctrination or the oppression of human freedoms[10]. Sputnik and the subsequent curriculum changes may have contributed to changes in "values in education" that were to come in the 1960's and 1970's.

The inquiry approach to Social Studies followed. Instead of learning what tradition had passed down, students were encouraged to follow the pattern of inquiry science. This approach encouraged less ethnocentric thinking, a widely accepted

axiom in social science research. Inquiry Social Studies also implied questioning America's traditional values--religious, patriotic, and family values. The prime example of inquiry Social Studies was a high quality, mediated curriculum called, "Man, A Course of Study"[11]; it lost financial favor because of its controversy.

THE UPHEAVED CURRICULUM. Whether "upheaval" is an overstatement or not, the Sixties are often viewed as lamentably as the Fifties are memorably. The September 5, 1988 Newsweek cover summarized that decade with the caption, "Will We Ever Get Over The '60s?" A major contributor to the disquietude was the Vietnam conflict, which illustrates the cognitive emphasis in American thought. Many American leaders approached the war with technical, managerial constructs, failing to take adequately into account such things as philosophy, politics, and other human factors. The value conflict between America's proponents of the war and large numbers of the public contributed to the value changes which took place in the Sixties and Seventies. One prevalent value in question was trust: many Americans concluded, We cannot trust our leaders. The apparent question which follows is, Who can we trust? The answer seems to have been, Ourselves, an answer consonant with a pluralistic society.

Arising from the milieu was the popular Values Clarification (VC). VC has been practiced a la official VC training and in various adaptations. Given its aims of "clarifying" values, teachers are not supposed to reject "bad values" or to squelch traditional ones, although in practice they may. This "value neutral" approach is based on the premise that values are personal things[12]. This departure from Durkheim's premise that individual values need a cultural context raises a fundamental question of VC: What values does the VC process lead children to develop of their own? The two-fold answer is 1) not necessarily the values of another or others and 2) ". . . a system that they can use to arrive at their own values"[13]. Many teachers--and parents--see a dilemma: the child eventually has to

exercise some values while determining his or her values, and some teachers--and parents--consider it morally or ethically irresponsible to remain neutral. VC advocates might offer these qualifiers: traditional indoctrination is inadequate in today's culture, there are no absolute values to build upon, responsible values can be developed in the kinds of discussions [VC experts] promote, human reason will best lead to individual value development anyway, and the child becomes better equipped to adapt to the changing cultural norms[14]. (These qualifiers--a mixture of assumptions, preference, and reason--are, of course, not value-neutral.)

The crux of the argument is whether survival (and success?) in a changing American culture is dependent upon a well ingrained set of values or transmutive ones. In any case, discussion can strengthen the application of values to daily living. Toward this end, some traditionalists have practiced VC. The impasse is the VCers' insistence that teachers have no right to impose given values or to declare some truths universal or absolute (not to mention the self-evident ones in the United States Declaration of Independence?)

THE COGNITIVE CURRICULUM. In the 1970's, the "back to basics" movement was predominant. Piagetian and (other) behavioral and cognitive psychology was used to engineer the movement.

Lawrence Kohlberg advanced ideas of cognitive development into a theory of moral development. (Its familiarity to readers is assumed.) Studies conducted in the United States and non-Western cultures have confirmed Kohlberg's and his disciples' beliefs that they were onto universal truth about how humans learn to develop morally. Kohlberg believed his system included both the <u>content</u> and the <u>process</u>, and in view of his emphasis upon justice and other traditional values (both stated and implied), he could deny the criticism that his system was relativistic. Kohlberg followers extol the inclusiveness and synthesis of his system.

Critics of the Kohlberg approach deny its synthesis. One reservation is the role

of language and the possibility that people learn to talk at the different levels without actually developing morally. Others criticize its cognitive emphasis: regardless of our culture's claims to rationalism, people's real convictions to do something include affective dimensions. Robert Coles' studies describe children's motivation to operate at low cognitive levels (defined by Kohlberg's stages) but at high conviction levels to accomplish the improbable. Ruby, a black child who persevered in desegregation of the New Orleans schools in 1962, could say she was moved by the love of God, but she was unable to articulate the reasons for her action at impressive levels of cognition[15]. Nonetheless, her action surpassed that of people who surely had "higher levels of cognitive development." Ruby demonstrated the "moral energy" Philibert says is missing in Kohlberg's theory[16], and there is little place for the concept of sin[17]; people like Hitler are better explained as people who did not develop correctly than people who are evil.

Both VC and Kohlbergian constructs have not successfully lived up to their neutrality claims. They do have built-in biases which impose their own--albeit reasonable--set of values while omitting or negating other values. "If students come to accept either the value relativism promoted by values clarification or the philosophical position Kohlberg endorses, they will be left with a one-sided view of what moral decision making is all about and how it should be accomplished"[18].

RESETTLED CURRICULUM. The 1980's seem to chronicle a general curriculum conservatism. Goodlad noted the abiding emphasis on accumulating facts and practicing basic skills, and he also found traditional goals: "The goals set for the schools are particularly idealistic in the social, civic, cultural, and personal domains. It is here that we find the most altruistic expectations for understanding differing value systems. . . and developing an understanding of the necessity for moral conduct. . ."[19]. However, they lacked delivery: "I conclude that the schools in our sample were contributing minimally to the attainment of such goals"[20].

Furthermore, "It is difficult to be sanguine about the moral and ethical learnings accompanying many of the experiences of schooling. My perception is that the emphasis on individual performance and achievement would be more conducive to cheating than to the development of moral integrity. . . Particularly lacking in our data is anything to suggest the deliberate involvement of students in making moral judgments and in understanding the difference between these and decisions based on scientific facts"[21]. Strike notes teachers' ethical responsibility: "People do not learn to make responsible choices by being told that it does not matter what they decide, since one choice is as good as another. They learn to make responsible choices by learning to apppraise arguments and consider evidence relevant to what they have to decide"[22].

When schools pursue moral and value education, they can expect difficulties: "So public schools, condemned for not being liberal enough, nor sufficiently conservative, not atheistic enough and neither religious, bombarded on all sides, paralyzed by criticism, try to stick it out in some narrow niche, safe from disagreement"[23]. However, schools may not be able to decline moral and value education even if they try: "But this, too, will not do today in an era in which public schools, the 'modern secular churches,' are supposed to provide salvation from all social miseries--including political corruption and urban crime. With expectations high, such circumspect withdrawal provides only more ire and disillusionment"[24].

Many schools are reporting effective and successful efforts to teach moral and value education. Given the nature of our pluralistic society, various patterns are probable. For example, The Quest National Center[25] offers a comprehensive curriculum program for adolescents which focuses on "responsibility" and includes training of teachers. Meanwhile, the Baltimore City Schools are participating with Johns Hopkins University and Coppin State College in a program to train literature

teachers to teach moral values and moral reasoning dialectically through a study of three classics[26]. Numerous curricula and programs are presently springing up across the country.

The Clovis (California) Unified School District has devised its own model, the Clovis Sparthenian, who is honest, responsible, respectful, dedicated, perseverant, self-respecting, and concerned for others. Clovis uses a broad-based approach through teachers, selected content, and school citizenship programs. What Clovis has resurrected is the ancient idea of character. After thousands of years of cultivation, the term has been out of vogue for the last few decades. The reasons can be understood by examining dictionary definitions: most will include references to distinctive qualities, ethical behavior, and moral firmness. The noncognitive, unmanageable nuances implied make empirical, short term studies of character development difficult if not impossible. Indeed, someone with "depth of character" will withstand or may even contest external manipulation or behavior modification. It follows that character is not a harmonious term with some popular modes of moral and value education or research endeavors. The merit of these studies is not being disputed in this paper; rather, the ancient and persistent notion of character is simply being reasserted. One entity, the National Character Laboratory[27], aims to restore character to its previous eminence.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RESISTANT. Moral and value education is not a liberal versus conservative issue. Both conservatives and liberals are wary of what values are imparted and--equally important--what values are left out as well as how such values would be imparted. However, if value neutrality is the myth which this paper has implied, pretending to be value neutral is applied or implicit obfuscation. "No position regarding moral education in schools is invulnerable to the charge that it constitutes a de facto program for the cultivation of certain values, and if that charge is true, then the self-described neutral position is actually indoctrinative,

because it falsely pretends to have no moral agenda"[28].

The persistent, resistant should wrestle with these (and related) questions:

1. How will students with minimal family relationships and regular diets of television grow up with a strong enough set of values to curb greed in our capitalistic economic system?

2. Who will vote for sustaining public schools if teachers do not impart their significance?

3. Who will resist the organizations, institutions, and businesses which promote violence and sexual usury if public schools do not include countering moral and value education?

TWO CONCLUSIONS: 1. America has gradually moved from familiarly Christian values to more traditional values to a plurality of values since 1900. A scientific, empirical shift in the curriculum accompanied by an emphasis upon the pursuit of cognitive development necessary to propel our technological culture may have been instrumental in the perceived crisis in "values in education." As Goodlad laments, students do not seem to be involved in learning the difference between making decisions based on scientific facts and making moral judgments[29]. Scientific and quasi-scientific processes are insufficient means for determining values: religion and philosophy based values have been historically superior. As Wynne noted, the merit of the faulted "Zeitgeist" psychologies is that "Their truth is essentially founded on philosophical values"[30]. Ryan and Lickona found shared assumptions among diverse ideologies of people involved in moral and value education. Their first assumption includes, "Philosophers speak of fundamental values such as justice, honesty, and love as being inherently and objectively good because they flow from the 'constitutive human good'--that which constitutes or defines our very humanity"[31].

2. The United States has been through an emphasis upon pluralism which may be

detrimental to America's future. Sociologist Bellah[32] and educational historian Butts[33] have addressed the individual-society and the unum-pluribus tension, respectively. The country may be shifting toward more unum; the general public may become increasingly sympathetic to a prevalence of traditional values. The challenge to the American culture is whether a common core of values is operable without losing the popular freedoms gained over the past 25 years. Indeed, some common core is essential to those gains: "A closer look uncovers the essential irony of today's 'obtrusive pluralism.' Many of the minorities and interest groups, announcing the independence of their moral outlook from that of 'the mainstream,' fail to discern that the guarantee of their 'freedom to be different' is best safeguarded by the existence of shared pluralist values that they implicitly disregard by denying a consensus"[34].

a POSTSCRIPT. The reader is urged to remember that while general analyses can be helpful, each of thousands of individual teacher's classroom settings can be considered alone. Thus, whatever be said or postulated, moral and value education will or will not take place depending upon a teacher. Surely, this always has been and will be a truism.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The term, "moral and value education," will be used in its broadest sense.

[2]Wisniewski, Richard. "The Ideal Professor of Education." Phi Delta Kappa. December 1986, page 292.

[3]This premise is extrapolated in part from Ellul, Jacques. The Technological Society. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965.

[4]Pritchard, Ivor. Character Education: Research Prospects and Problems. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education. April 1988. Page 4. Pritchard cites three sources:

Grant, Gerald. "The Character of Education and the Education of Character." Daedalus, 110 (1981) 3: 135-149.

Grant, Gerald. "Schools that Make an Imprint: Creating a Strong Positive Ethos." In J. H. Bunzel, (Ed.) Challenges to American Schools: The Case for Standards and Values. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Peters, R. S. Authority, Responsibility, and Education. London: Allen & Unwin, 1973.

[5]Canavan, Francis. "Unity in Diversity." The World and I. September, 1987, Page 51.

[6]Butts, R. Freeman. The Revival of Civic Learning: A Rationale for Citizenship Education in American Schools. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa, 1980.

[7]Bellah, Robert N. "Civil Religion in America." In Religion in America. William G. McLoughlin and Robert N. Bellah (Editors). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968. Pages 17-18.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Analysis and the decisions which follow require the application of values. Science does not stipulate what values, but the empirical nature of science fits quite naturally with empirically based decisions. To the concern of some philosophers, empiricism merits success (Does it work?) over ethics (Is it right?)

[10]A continual succession of Christian, Jewish, and theistic scientists have understood the relationship of science and faith as complimentary, not contradictory. A careful explanation of science and religion in historical perspective has been provided by Hummel, Charles. The Galileo Connection. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

[11]See Jones, Richard M. Fantasy and Feeling in Education. New York: New York University Press, 1968, for a favorable presentation of the ideas guiding this curriculum.

[12]Raths, Louis; Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon. Values and Teaching: Working With Values in the Classroom. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1966. (2nd edition, 1978.)

[13]Simon, Sidney and Sally Wendkos Olds. Helping Your Child Learn Right from Wrong: A guide to Values Clarification. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976, Page 17.

[14]For a comprehensive critique of values clarification, see Chazan, Barry. Contemporary Approaches to Moral Education. New York: Teachers College Press, 1985, Pages 45-67.

[15]Coles, Robert. The Moral Life of Children. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986.

[16]Philibert, Paul J. "The Motors of Morality: Religion and Relation." In Joy, Donald M. (Editor). Moral Development Foundations: Judeo-Christian Alternatives to Piaget/Kohlberg. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.

[17]Dykstra, Craig. "What Are People Like? An Alternative to Kohlberg's View." In Joy, Donald M. (Editor). Moral Development Foundations: Judeo-Christian Alternatives to Piget/Kohlberg. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983.

[18]Casement, William. "Moral Education: Form Without Content?" The Educational

Forum. Volume 48, Number 2, Winter 1984, Page 188.

[19]Goodlad, John I. A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1984, page 239.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., pages 241-242.

[22]Kenneth A. Strike and Jonas F. Soltis. The Ethics of Teaching. New York: Teachers College Press, 1985, page 61.

[23]Prakash, Madhu Suri. "Partners in Moral Education: Communities and Their Public Schools." In Kevin Ryan and George F. McLean (Editors). Character Development in Schools and Beyond. New York: Praeger, 1987, page 123.

[24]Ibid.

[25]The address is The Quest National Center; 6655 Sharon Woods Blvd.; Columbus, Ohio 43229.

[26]Furlong, John J. and William J. Carroll. "Teaching Moral Reasoning." The Educational Forum, Vol. 52, No. 4, Summer 1988, Pages 363-371.]

[27]The address is The National Character Laboratory, Inc.; 4635 Leeds Avenue; El Paso, TX 79903.

[28]Op. cit. Pritchard, page 16.

[29]Op. cit. Goodlad, pages 241-242.

[30]Wynne, Edward A. "Student and Schools." In Kevin Ryan and George F. McLean (Editors). Character Development in Schools and Beyond. New York: Praeger, 1987, pages 97-118, page 104.

[31]Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona. "Character Development: The Challenge and the Model." In Kevin Ryan and George F. McLean (Editors). Character Development in Schools and Beyond. New York: Praeger, 1987, page 18.

[32]Bellah, Robert N., et. al. Habits of the Hearts: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

[33]Op. cit. Butts, R. Freeman.

[34]Op. cit. Prakash, page 138.